



United States  
Office of Personnel Management

# **FWS Job Grading Standard for**

# **Materials Handler**

# **6907**

## **Additional Available Guidance**

See [Digest of Significant Classification Decisions & Opinions, Vol. 13](#) for guidance on intended use of Laundry Worker (WG-7304) versus Materials Handler series. See [Digest Vol. 15](#) for guidance on proper grading of mixed-series, mixed-grade jobs.

**Workforce Compensation & Performance Service  
Office of Classification Programs  
December 1997, HRCD-4**

## WORK COVERED

This standard covers nonsupervisory work involved in receiving, storing, and assembling for issue, shipment, and distribution, a wide variety of bin and bulk supplies, materials, equipment, and commodities using mechanized, automated, and manual material moving equipment, devices, and systems. The work requires general knowledge of the methods used in processing, handling, and storing of materials and equipment through a supply facility; the ability to log receipt, storage, and shipment data; and the ability to use manual or mechanized equipment to move, stack, bin, and position materials and equipment. The work also requires the ability to organize, arrange, and remove stock in storage areas in accordance with established procedures to prevent damage, deterioration, and loss. Most work requires the incidental or regular use of fork lifts and motor vehicles.

## WORK NOT COVERED

This standard does not cover work that primarily involves:

- Assembling items from backup areas and stacking and arranging them on shelves, bins, and other locations in commissary, clothing issue, and other personal service operations. (See [Job Grading Standard for Store Worker, 6914.](#))
- Establishing identity such as stock number, model, and serial number of various items together with determining whether the items are serviceable, repairable, or too costly to repair. (See [Job Grading Standard for Materials Examiner and Identifier, 6912.](#))
- Performing clerical or technical support work concerned with receiving, handling, storing, maintaining while in storage, issuing, or physically controlling items within a distribution system. (See [Supply Clerical and Technician Series, GS-2005.](#))
- Performing technical work such as advising on distribution facilities, storage space, manpower, material handling equipment, and related operating requirements; planning, evaluating, and selecting appropriate sites and facilities to store material; or planning, analyzing, evaluating, or advising on distribution and storage policies, methods, and procedures. (See [Distribution Facilities and Storage Management Series, GS-2030.](#))
- Loading, placing, securing, and unloading air cargo in an air terminal and on aircraft including responsibility for maintaining proper weight and balance, positioning cargo, and determining cargo compatibility. (See [Aircraft Freight Loading Series, 6968.](#))
- Operating electric, diesel, or gasoline powered fork lift vehicles as primary duty to move, stack, unstack, load and unload materials in and around warehouses, storage areas, loading docks, and on and off vehicles, rail cars, etc. (See [Job Grading Standard for Fork Lift Operator, 5704.](#))

- Ready and handling for storage, transfer, or shipment explosive or toxic munitions such as poison gases, radioactive materials, solid propellant ballistic missiles requiring strictly controlled temperatures, humidity, shock and vibrations protection and requiring knowledge of explosive materials, mechanisms, and related handling characteristics. (See [Missile/Toxic Materials Handling Series, 6511.](#))

## TITLES

Jobs covered by this standard are to be titled Materials Handler.

## GRADE LEVELS

This Standard describes three levels of nonsupervisory materials handler work, grades 4, 5, and 6. Grade 5 represents the full performance level or work. This Standard does not describe all possible grade levels for this occupation. If jobs differ substantially from the skill, knowledge, and other work requirement described in the grade levels of the standard, they may be graded above or below these grades based on the application of sound job grading methods.

## NOTE TO USERS

Since jobs involving warehouse work are often mixed jobs, such work should be graded in accordance with OPM's FWS mixed job policy. Therefore, if the highest level of work represents a single occupation (e.g., Fork Lift Operating, 5704), typically the job should be titled and graded according to the job grading standard that represents the highest skill and qualification requirements when such work is performed as a regular and recurring part of the job, even if the duties are not performed for a majority of the time. (See [Digest Vol. 15.](#)) (Also, see [Digest Vol. 13](#) for intended use of [Laundry Worker, WG-7304](#), versus Materials Handler, WG-6907, series.)

**6907-4****MATERIALS HANDLER, GRADE 4****6907-4**

*General:* Grade 4 materials handler follow detailed procedures or instructions to perform warehouse work which involves receiving, storing, and shipping a variety of bin and bulk supplies, material, equipment, and commodities. The work is usually repetitive and involves unloading, stacking, binning, rotating, and marking stock in accordance with standardized operating instructions. They check shipping documents to verify incoming and outgoing shipments and may use automated material identification equipment such as bar code wands, computer terminals, and laser scanners tied into a central computer to select storage locations of items being shipped or received. Where assignments differ from standardized tasks, workers at this level receive guidance from a higher level worker or supervisor. Grade 4 materials handlers use common handtools such as hammers, screwdrivers, and pliers as well as handtrucks, handlifts, pallet jacks, dollies, and electric jack lifts. They may also use automated stock selector equipment such as mechanized platform lifts, automated mini-stackers, and guided material movement vehicles. In some work situations, material handlers at this level operate warehouse tractors, fork lifts, tugs, and general purpose vehicles under close supervision or in developmental capacity.

*Skill and Knowledge:* Materials handlers at the grade 4 level have knowledge of the general warehouse layout, item identification codes, basic warehouse procedures, and the storage areas in order to be able to place or pull stock and materials in accordance with standard procedures. They are able to stock, move, arrange, and rotate warehouse items in accordance with operating instructions or under guidance of a higher level employee. They are able to complete appropriate forms relating to stock description, quantity, unit of issue, and the labeling requirements for incoming and outgoing materials, equipment and commodities. They use computer terminal equipment to determine stock locations and make selections by quantity and stock numbers. Grade 4 materials handlers are skilled in the use of manual dollies, electric jacks, and handtools used in warehouse tasks such as hammers, pliers, strapping and stretch wrapping tools and equipment, tape fasteners, metal band sheers and related equipment. They are able to use wire guided aisle platform lifts in automated facilities to reach high level warehouse shelves to pick up or deliver stock items from the storage areas. They identify obvious damage to equipment and materials through visual inspections.

*Responsibility:* At the grade 4 level, materials handlers work under the guidance of a supervisor or higher graded worker who provides general instructions on repetitive assignments and specific guidance including written instructions on new operations or procedures. They generally perform repetitive assignments such as stocking, rotating, and marking stock items which are usually covered by detailed procedures or standardized instructions. When work is in mechanized or automated warehouse areas with electro-mechanical platform (aisle) lifts, grade 4 materials handlers are responsible for the safe operation of the lifts used in narrow and confined aisles or corridors and for observing all safety procedures for various automated systems and

**6907-4****6907-4**

equipment such as conveyors and mechanized carousels. Work is periodically spot checked by a supervisor or higher graded employee to insure adherence to procedures and objectives.

*Physical Effort:* Grade 4 materials handlers are often required to stand on hard surfaces for extended periods of time, and to bend, stoop, and work in tiring and sometimes uncomfortable positions. They may lift and carry items that weigh up to 8 kilograms (40 pounds). The heavier items are moved with weight handling equipment or with assistance from other workers.

*Working Conditions:* At the grade 4 level, work is done inside or outside in areas that may be hot, damp, cold, drafty, or poorly lighted. Materials handlers are regularly exposed to the possibility of cuts, scrapers, bruises, abrasions, falls, and injury from falling stock or mechanized work areas. When working in hazardous materials areas, they may be subject to exposure from radiation, toxins, explosive hazards, or chemical fumes. Work may require wearing protective clothing such as hardhats, steel toed shoes, rubber gloves, masks, and rubber aprons.

*General:* Unlike grade 4 materials handlers, grade 5 materials handlers usually work independently in a wide range of warehousing activities, including receiving, storing, selecting, and shipping general or specialized bulk and bin materials and equipment. Using a broad general knowledge or warehouse plans and procedures, grade 5 materials handlers are able to independently load and unload materials check, assemble, and process documents, and route materials and equipment to correct locations or storage areas. They also locate, access, load and move material for shipment and verify or prepare documents either manually or by using automated equipment such as computer terminals and bar code wands to read, store, track, and prepare materials documentation.

Grade 5 materials handlers prepare shipping and inventory documents with required data for manual or automated inventory systems. In some work situations, they load and unload shipments from trucks, rail cars, and other material conveyances using fork lifts, manual and mechanized pallet jacks, side loaders, stacker cranes, and automated guided vehicles in mechanized warehouses. When operating automated storage vehicles they may use remote terminals and keyboards to receive and transmit "pick and stow" data into a central computer. They may operate warehouse tractors, fork lifts, tugs and trucks, and other general purpose vehicles and perform routine operator maintenance. Materials handlers at the grade 5 level may work in hazardous materials storage areas requiring them to learn and follow specialized handling and storage procedures as required by regulatory and safety requirements.

*Skill and Knowledge:* In contrast to grade 4 materials handlers who perform routine and repetitive tasks, grade 5 materials handlers are assigned a wide variety and range of duties requiring more specialized knowledges of warehouse plan, methods, procedures, and techniques of material handling. They are able to operate mechanized equipment including utility vehicles, standard size fork lifts, mobile stock selectors, and electromechanical automated equipment, such as high rise automated storage storage and retrieval vehicles, which use remote computer terminals to receive and transmit storage, inventory, and requisition data in automated warehouses. In both automated and nonautomated warehouses they are able to process and independently complete shipping and receiving documents to insure correctness of quantities, identification criteria, and labeling. They may use automated equipment such as optical readers and scanners (bar code wands) and computer keyboards to develop computerized inventory data, access materials, and fill item requisitions. They are skilled in stacking, moving, and arranging items on pallets and must consider height, weight, and special handling requirements. They are able to use pallet measuring gauges and automated devices to insure that proper height, weight, and other load and storage requirements are met and damage in storage or in transit is prevented.

Grade 5 materials handlers in mechanized warehouses have a good working knowledge of the

manned and unmanned electromechanical devices and systems used such as multipack induction conveyors and robotic pallet manipulators. When regularly working with or assigned to the specialized handling of hazardous materials, grade 5 materials handlers must have knowledge and skills required for the safe handling, storage and movement of materials handled. This is usually acquired through formal training courses as well as on-the-job training to insure that all regulatory and safety requirements are met.

*Responsibility:* At the grade 5 level materials handlers are responsible for document processing and verification of the quantity and condition of materials and equipment handled. Unlike material handlers at the grade 4 level who work on repetitive tasks or under close supervision, grade 5 material handlers receive general instructions from a supervisor. Assignments are usually completed without guidance on methods, procedures, or techniques, and work is reviewed for compliance with general guidelines and results achieved. Grade 5 materials handlers follow established methods and procedures, and work is spot-checked upon completion for accuracy, adherence to procedural requirements, thoroughness, and results. Grade 5 materials handlers may be responsible for operating mechanized and electromechanical systems such as fork lift trucks, tugs, manned storage and retrieval vehicles, and highrise platform lifts which may operate in narrow and constricted warehouses aisles. They observe all safety procedures required when working near mechanized towveyers, powered conveyor systems, and other mechanized equipment.

Grade 5 materials handlers, whether using manual or computerized equipment, are responsible for the processing of documents or data handled. They work independently using computer terminals, keyboards, and optical scanners to develop coding data or with traditional printed shipping and receiving documents, making written entries and verifying data in printed formats.

*Physical Effort:* Physical effort at this grade is the same as that described at [grade WG-4](#).

*Working Conditions:* Working conditions at this grade are the same as those described at [grade WG-4](#).

*General:* Unlike grade 5 level materials handlers, who at one time or another may perform a full range of warehousing duties, materials handlers at the grade 6 level usually handle or oversee one or more product lines, a segment of a large warehouse, or serve as the senior employee in a smaller warehouse or supply facility. They may assist the supervisor in developing plans for storage and arrangement of stock in accordance with agency regulations which determine the configuration setup, movement, rearrangement and traffic flow. Grade 6 materials handlers in larger warehouse facilities typically have responsibility for a storage and space utilization in accordance with agency regulations for a specific commodity or equipment group such as general supplies, construction materials, medical supplies, high value items, or electronic systems, and usually work on their own initiative to consolidate materials, and provide maximum space utilization and protection of materials. In hazardous materials storage areas, they insure the safe receipt, storage and movement of hazardous and toxic materials and substances such as certain types of ammunition, explosives, chemicals, or radioactive materials in accordance with facility and regulatory requirements. In smaller warehouse facilities, grade 6 materials handlers may serve as the senior nonsupervisory worker of the facility, laying out storage space, establishing item locations, determining organization and arrangement of stock, and identifying high and low usage items according to agency regulations and procedures. Typically, this encompasses a full spectrum of warehouse functions. Grade 6 materials handlers may serve as a senior member of a warehouse project team of materials handlers involved in a special project such as warehouse conversion from manual to automated systems, relocating a major commodity or equipment group, or setting up a new commodity group area. In addition to the equipment operating functions performed at the grade 5 level, grade 6 materials handlers may operate large warehouse perimeter vehicles such as cargo trucks, stake trucks, and jumbo tugs. They may also functionally coordinate incoming and outgoing shipments and placement of materials with docking area and scheduling personnel to facilitate movement of materials in accordance with priorities, scheduling requirements, and space allocations.

*Skill and Knowledge:* Unlike grade 5 materials handlers who generally work under established guidelines and instructions requiring general knowledges of warehouse functions, grade 6 materials handlers must have an indepth knowledge of the overall warehousing plan, documentation requirements, and accepted warehousing methods, procedures, and techniques. As senior workers, they often work independently and may be assigned functional responsibilities for a major commodity segment or equipment group in a larger warehouse, or may serve as the primary materials handler in a small warehouse such as a base or post supply facility. They are able to lay out storage space and establish item and material locations in accordance with agency regulations. Grade 6 materials handlers are able to prepare inventory and production reports, screen and identify shipping and receiving documents for discrepancies, and direct shipments to shipping or storage areas. They have a thorough knowledge of the physical distribution functions of a warehouse such as material receiving, storage, issuing, and



preservation. Grade 6 materials handlers determine sequences for loading materials and organize incoming shipments for maximum space utilization, safety considerations, and damage protection. They are skilled in the use of onsite automated equipment and systems. They are able to operate the larger material moving equipment and vehicles inside the warehouse and fork lifts and related vehicles in outside holding areas on unpaved, unimproved, or difficult terrain. Grade 6 materials handlers who work in hazardous materials areas have knowledge of specialized hazardous handling, storing, and safety procedures gained through formal course study and on-the-job training to insure adherence to governing regulatory procedures and policies. They are able independently to place, store, maintain, and oversee certain types of hazardous materials such as toxic chemicals, pesticides, flammables, and some explosives, ammunition, and radioactive materials in accordance with regulatory and other safety requirements.

*Responsibility:* Materials handlers at the grade 6 level are generally responsible for performing a full range of warehouse functions in either a major segment of a large warehouse or as the principal materials handler in a small warehouse. Their responsibilities include receiving, locating, storing, shipping, and rewarehousing materials, commodities, or equipment in accordance with established procedures and operating requirements. Unlike the grade 5 materials handlers, they generally work with a high degree of independence in determining sequences of loading and unloading, developing space utilization plans, and implementing the movement of materials from dock to bin or from storage to shipping. In mechanized warehouses they may provide guidance to lower level workers in the operation of specialized equipment such as manned storage and retrieval cranes, automated stock selectors, multipack induction conveyors, and other automated or mechanized equipment. They also provide guidance to lower level workers in accessing and using remote computer terminals and equipment to verify inventory levels, fill orders, place stock, and develop the necessary computerized documentation. In nonautomated warehouses they are responsible for effectively accomplishing all types of warehouse functions as assigned. They are often responsible for directing and guiding the work of lower level workers as well as making determinations as to placement, unloading, timing, and general movement of materials within assigned areas. Grade 6 materials handlers work under the general direction of a supervisor or facility supervisor. In smaller warehouse and storage facilities grade 6 materials handlers may have responsibility for the movement of the stock as well as the maintenance of stock level inventories. In larger warehouse stock such as hazardous materials, high value items, an equipment or commodity group, or surplus materials areas, insuring appropriate adherence to established documentation, safety, material movement, and preservation procedures and requirements.

Assignments may include responsibility for the rewarehousing of a large storage area, maintaining and arranging storage areas in accordance with warehouse plans and safety procedures, and the automated equipment and warehouse material movement vehicles. Grade 6

materials handlers may recommend the sequence of warehouse functions for an assigned area such as the order of receiving, shipping, and issuing, based on general guidelines and knowledge of material movement priorities and procedures.

Review of work is based on results achieved including the meeting of schedules and priorities, accuracy of stock balances, orderliness of storage areas, adherence to general warehouse plans, and customer service effectiveness.

*Physical Effort:* Physical effort at this grade is the same as that described at [grade WG-4](#).

*Working Conditions:* Working conditions at this grade are the same as those described at [grade WG-4](#).